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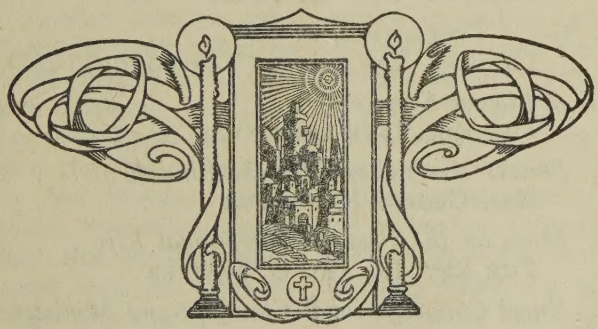

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The Neurotic Gospel of Our Time

John W. Abbott
Andover Newton Theological Seminary

PROPHETS have been proclaimed fools down through the ages. The ancient plight of one who had seen a vision of truth and attempted to tell his colleagues about it was portrayed by Plato in his *Allegory of the Cave*. They would have crucified him if they could. Even the ancient Israelites classed men like Amos and Hosea as candidates for a pre-Christian insane asylum. They pronounced a message of doom upon the tribe, forecasting punishment for the wicked and chastisement for those who obstructed the prophetic mission. Even within the temple, the prophet was met with hostility. Those who were supposedly religious people simply could not understand this peculiar creature, who claimed to have seen the truth when no one else had seen it. Such was the fate of God's watchman in Israel.

The present day is no exception. We worship in modern churches instead of Hebrew temples. We discuss modern theological viewpoints instead of ancient modes of sacrifice. But we are casting our Christian gospel upon the altars of Baal, and the prophet who speaks of it is ostracized, like Plato's man in the cave, because he sees the truth.

We survey the world today with the abysmal ignorance of the ivory tower of the modern theological seminary. Our gospel is beset with the neurotic perversions of self-centeredness. What goes on inside the soul is considered more important than what goes on in the world. This ego-centricity which so easily besets us centers our attention upon impulses which become ends in themselves instead of means to the construction of a worthwhile religious framework. We have sinned like the Israelites of old.

There can be no Christian introvert in these days. One who spends his time in thoughtful introspection, and searches within his soul for the truths of God's revelation, will never find them there. We live in a world, a community, composed of the social experiences of men; and God speaks through those experiences.

In like manner, there can be no Christian escapist. Those who refuse to live in reality are swatted like flies on a screen. Those who use religion as a means to get out of the world find themselves so torn by it that their personalities are destroyed by the very world from which they are trying to escape. We have laid down the maxims that "God is good" and that "Right must triumph." But so what? No maxim on earth can save us. Civilization may well decay and be destroyed, while the escapist sits on the edge of an atom bomb and cries out that it cannot go off. It is all well and good to say that God is love; but there is very little in our reaction to the present situation to show it. The gospel of modern Protestantism is neurotic, because it has a morbid or unhealthy tendency which can lead to nothing but evil. This is the plight of the "crisis theologian." Some one has defined sin as self-centeredness, and if that be true, our gospel is the greatest sin of all. Even if we believe that God is good, our gospel about him is not good. It looks inside instead of out; it looks down instead of up; it smiles instead of frowns; it makes us die instead of live.

These are days for realism as we face the world with religion. They are the most dangerous days in history, and we have to face the facts. This may sound like pessimism, and indeed it is; but it need not cause despair. It is much more sensible to look at the facts and then try to do something about them than to adopt

a false pseudo-optimism by which we smile our brightest though the night be too dark to see the smile. The word "challenge" is outworn in journalistic circles, and yet we cannot escape it. Our job as leaders of the church is to accept the challenge and then to live by it.

And what is that challenge? The pattern is found in that Platonic prophet of truth. *He was a heretic.* We need heretics now, those who fearlessly and dauntlessly can carry forward new structures of thought into the future, lest the church itself become a relic of an ancient and by-gone culture. We must re-think the gospel in terms of the atomic age. To speak of eternal damnation now is to confuse the hell of reality, the hell of present-day civilization, with the heaven of unreality, that blissful utopian dreamland into which we try to escape. To get away from the present crisis by using ancient symbols meaningless in modern society is to convict ourselves before the spirit of God of lack of faith and strength to live in the world. Yet indeed we must, if we be rational, find the sturdiness of character to meet these times, lest we hang helpless by hairs caught on the trees of our own self-centeredness.

Indeed, it is well and good to speak of salvation. But what vain conceit it is to expect to be saved apart from the social needs of the age. There is no figure so inspiring as that of Jesus walking among men, but it is blasphemy against his spirit to use it as a crutch to get away from the world.

Our socially theological heretics must be social prophets who are not afraid to apply their gospel to civilization. The church of today cries out, like the Israelites of old, that the prophet is a fool. The Protestant ministry, like those chained in Plato's cave, would have nothing to do with those of their own number who have the daring to speak of social applications of theology, who attempt to substitute new conceptions for old.

This is not merely to plead for the "Social Gospel." That time-worn term is outmoded and of no avail. Rather is it to proclaim that the Christian faith is centered in a social culture and a social community, expressed in the world for people who live in the world.

This social emphasis cannot be added as an attachment to our self-centered gospel. Mere social action, though valuable, is not enough. To limit it to that would be, in the words of Dr. George A. Coe, like adding a side vestibule of freedom to a cathedral of conformity. We have to rebuild the cathedral, and there is no salvation outside of it. This requires the restructuring of personalities and the creation of an environment in which people, those instruments of God's revelation, may find it worthwhile to live. The most important word in the Lord's Prayer is the first word, *Our*—our father, our God, our heritage, our common life. The Christian tradition belongs to all of us. The grace of God, if there be such, belongs to all. There is no use in appropriating it for ourselves.

Our task as ministers, then, becomes one of attempting to seek our salvation, our release from self-centeredness in the reconstruction of the social order. Action takes the place of theory. Our social philosophy becomes a basic part of the human personality.

In concrete terms, the Christian life becomes the process of building what Josiah Royce called "The Beloved Community." Rauschenbusch called it the "Co-operative Commonwealth." Christianity is, then, the challenge of the labor movement, the opportunity for race relations, the goal of security and opportunity for all peoples, the planning of legislation. The personality is integrated around actual social issues, and who can tell the benefit that can come from that?

Christian introversion and escapism then are transformed into the actuality of working in the world. We become so wrapped up in the goal of living Christianity that we have no time to be fettered and tied by the dictates of a neurotic gospel. We stand today on the threshold

of the future, convicted by our own misunderstanding of the purpose of our ministry.

So go out. Tell your people to forget their ego-centricity and begin to build an ideal society. It may seem impossible in this present age, but why are we to be discouraged? Every sermon should at least relate to that goal. Young people's programs should be built around it, and it should be the theme of every conference.

These are difficult days to preach. But they are days for prophets who have the courage of their convictions. Perhaps, like those of old, there are those of us who proclaim the prophet a fool. But he is God's watchman, watching over society for signs of promise. And who can tell when we shall see the first sign?

More Scope in the Communion Service

The Rev. Oscar E. Maurer, D.D.

Pastor Emeritus of Center Church, New Haven, Conn.

HAVING been "enlarged unto liberty" and become an itinerant ecclesiastic, I have had opportunity recently to visit many churches both within and outside our own fellowship and to observe their methods of worship from the viewpoint of the pew. Respect for one's ministerial brethren involves the obligation of a sympathetic participation in the worship of which they are the leaders, but it is impossible to suspend, entirely, one's critical faculties. I have found this to be especially true when observing the conduct of the Communion service.

Any one laboring under the perhaps naïve assumption that growing Christian unity involves practices which are at least similar if not uniform, is bound to be disillusioned by the wide dissimilarities prevalent in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. During this past year I have attended Communion services in so-called "free" churches varying all the way from a purely humanistic sharing of bread and wine which differed from a church supper only in the paucity of the food offered, to the other extreme of a ritual which approximated an Orthodox eucharist. To be sure, in each case the bread and wine were there and perhaps this is the significant common element. But whatever the form, one could not escape the impression that it was not the congregation's. It was a form of the minister's own devising and into it he had put, no doubt with great sincerity, his personal sentiments, which often became sentimentalities. It was a form made by him for the people but not really theirs. When he leaves they will probably have to familiarize themselves with another form of the new minister's devising.

Even when the liturgy avoided these defects it so commonly lacked scope and universality. Either it was almost entirely on the human plane—a group of well-disposed Christian folk breaking bread together, a pallid modern equivalent of the Agape; or it stressed only man's personal relation with Christ. The Lord's Supper is both a social and religious act. The invitation (seldom given) "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors . . . draw nigh and take the Supper of the Lord to your comfort," contains profound implications that are both social and theological. Its dimensions are both horizontal and vertical.

How can any Kingdom-minded minister celebrate the Lord's Supper without offering a prayer for "the whole estate of Christ's church"? And yet, I must

testify that I have seldom heard such a prayer at the services to which I refer. It is true that, happily, the churches are making much of the World Wide Communion on the first Sunday of October, but should not every Communion be world-wide in its scope? Should it not lead the communicants to the point of spiritual imagination and experience where the walls of their church fold back and they are one in spirit and sympathy with God's people everywhere?

Indeed, the spiritual scope of the Communion service should extend beyond earthly boundaries and include "the whole family in heaven and on earth." We break the bread and pour the wine in memory of our Lord. He is spiritually present as he was physically present in the upper room in Jerusalem. But are there not others who are present in our memory, too—loved ones who sat by our side and shared these gracious gifts with us in days gone by? Are we untrue to our evangelical heritage when we feel that our departed loved ones are spiritually with us and that our Communion is a Communion of Saints? Why is it that one so seldom hears a prayer of commemoration, such as "O Lord God, the light of the faithful, the strength of those who labor and the hope of the blessed dead; we praise thee for all thy saints who have witnessed in their lives a good confession, and especially those dear to us who have fallen asleep in Jesus"? Instead the prayers are usually highly contemporaneous and are focused on those present. Again, a lack of spiritual scope.

In most of the services referred to the minister gave thanks for the bread and wine and for that which they symbolize, and this eucharistic element is perhaps another common bond. But even though our churches have gone in for chancels and altars, many of them perfectly appointed, most of our ministers still shy away from the sacrificial aspect of the Lord's Supper. Only once did I hear the minister pray God to "accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and sanctify these creatures of bread and wine, which, according to thy Son's holy institution we now consecrate to their sacred use." In this case the minister had the courage and wisdom to complete the prayer with the offertory: "And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice unto thee." The very words of institution imply a two-fold sacrifice: "This is my body, given for you; this do in remembrance of me."

Our churches would do well to practice the use of silence during the distribution of the bread and wine. With only two exceptions among the churches visited, the organ played throughout the distribution, sometimes meditative compositions and sometimes familiar hymns. Whichever it was, I found my attention divided between the sacramental act on which I was trying to concentrate and the music. Perhaps others were helped in their private devotions. Some people are not accustomed to silence and are rather afraid of it. But the very hush that comes over a congregation in moments of spiritual concentration has something sacramental about it, as our Quaker friends well know. There is spiritual scope in reverent silence.

Is not the Lord's Supper something which was given to the church by Christ, and not a rite of our own choice and devising? We have the right to assume that any gift of Christ partakes of the nature of the giver and is as comprehensive in its scope as is his love. Paradoxically, this gift is a center of disunity instead of unity among the churches, perhaps even among the churches of our own fellowship. As the ecumenical church develops this unhappy paradox must be resolved. The great sacrament must be given the central place Christ meant it to have. And there must eventually be at least enough uniformity in its administration to enable Christians to know how to act when they come to the Lord's Table, in whatever church they attend, and to find not narrowness and limitation but spiritual scope.

To a Preacher of the Gospel!

Dr. W. J. Thompson
Los Angeles, California

What a glorious thing to preach
In Christ's name, to inspire and teach.
Brother, you have been set apart
To influence mind, soul and heart!

Remove from men doubt and despair,
And bring to them new hope and cheer:
Fill darkened souls with Heaven's light,
And strengthen weak lives with God's might!

With joyful confidence proclaim
Redemption in the Saviour's name—
This is to preach, and this to bless.
God crown your message with success!

The Place of Prayer. II.

The Rev. Raymond A. Beardslee
Springfield, Vermont

GOD is pure Spirit—a Spirit, infinitely kind and patient, infinitely just and faithful; a Spirit of transcendent power and nearness, triumphantly creative and yearningly recreative; a Spirit, infinitely and intimately personal.

The world is a pitiful and a shameful mess. It rates a tremendous judging—*and our God is able to judge it!* It is infinitely worth saving—*and our God can save it!* We cannot live sanely in such a world without such a God, and we cannot honestly contemplate such a God in such a world and withhold from Him our unreserved penitence, our passionate faith, and our eager, loyal partnership. He is the whole hope, of the whole world, of the single soul.

When human hearts really see a God like that, and feel themselves moved to commune with Him, and crave to enter into His partnership, they do not have to look it up in a little black book to find out what to say! By the very nature of things their worship and prayer, as well as their every other word and act, will show an unmistakable earnestness and humility, a profound sincerity, a living reality, an instinctive originality.

When this vision of God fades away and burns out, worship, also, loses its soul, and becomes, first, an irksome routine; then, a heedless habit; then, a physical formalism; and, finally, a frank idolatry. Prayer, likewise, loses its soul, and becomes, first, repetitious; then, artificial; then, mechanical; and, at last, exhibitionist.

The converse is equally true. When prayer has become a set form of words and worship a fixed ritual, the vision of God has long ago burned out. When the tongue has lost its natural eloquence, the emotions of the heart are already cold.

Jesus warned against all these symptoms of death. He pointed to the pretentious Pharisees, with their literal and formalistic phylacteries and their prolonged petitions; to the hypocrites, with the brazen sham of their obtrusive prayers of street-corner and synagogue; and to the wordy heathen, with the endless and senseless jabber of their repetitious devotions.

I

In the light of Jesus' warnings about prayer, what has been the historical record, as an exhibit of human nature?

The Jewish custom was prayer thrice daily—at the third, sixth, and ninth hours. (The author of that monotonous and mechanical alphabetic acrostic, the 119th Psalm, which rings the changes on the word "Law," wrote proudly in verse 164: "Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.")

The early Christian Church increased the hours of prayer to six, adding midnight, the beginning of the day, and the beginning of the night.

About the sixth century the monastic orders further increased the "canonical hours" to eight, with names, viz., Matins (midnight), Lauds (sunrise), Prime (6 A.M.), Terce (9 A.M.), Sext (noon), None (3 P.M.), Vespers (sunset), and Compline (9 P.M.).

The Breviary (*i.e.,* abridgment), published in four volumes, one for each season of the year, contains the "offices" (ritual of scripture and prayers) for these canonical hours. This is the daily service of the Roman Catholic Church. "Every cleric in orders and every member of a religious order must publicly join in or privately read aloud (*i.e.,* using the lips as well as the eyes—it takes about two hours in this way) the whole of the Breviary services allotted for each day. . . . Laymen do not use the Breviary as a manual of devotion to any great extent." (Encyc. Brit., Art. "Breviary.")

For laymen, the use of beads for praying is an ancient device, and of such wide use that, within and without the Roman Catholic Church, probably three-quarters of the people of the world now use beads for keeping count of repeated prayers.

The Hermit Paul, in the fourth century, offered 300 prayers daily, counting mechanically by taking pebbles out of a kettle.

The Mohammedans use strings of 33, or 66, or 99 beads, for reciting the 99 names of the attributes of God.

Buddhists use strings of 100 beads.

In the modern Roman Catholic Church the standard rosary is arranged in three parts of five "decades," each decade containing one Paternoster, ten Ave Marias, one Gloria, and a subject for meditation from the "mysteries" of the life of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin. There are several other varieties. The Passionists have a Rosary of the Five Wounds. The Crown of Our Lord has 33 Paters, five Aves, and one Credo. Saint Bridget's Rosary has seven Paters and 63 Aves, one for each year of Mary's life. (Encyc. Brit., Art. "Rosary.")

"Much speaking." "Vain repetitions." Christ's diagnosis was as prophetic as it was penetrating.

A person is not "religious"—"devotional"—because he repeats the 150 Psalms every day; nor "spiritual" by virtue of saying the same prayer 300 times a day.

The ultimate extreme of the mechanical formula has been devised by the Lamaist Buddhists in Thibet and elsewhere, in the "praying wheel"—a small or large barrel, rotated by hand, wind, or water, within which a long strip of paper printed with countless repetitions of the phrase: "The jewel in the Lotus, Amen," is wound off from one spool onto another as the barrel is rotated! As the printed words pass from one bobbin to the other they are considered to be "uttered." The theological implications of running the device backward are not stated!

II

We Protestant Christians do not use either prayer wheel or rosary, but how much better can we claim to be when we go to somebody's book and extract a printed prayer to read over to God? "But the printed prayer is very beautiful!" So are wax flowers—and every Solomon's bee in the world knows the difference between the imitation and the real! Shall God know less? "But the printed prayer is better than I can compose!" If a min

ster cannot bring forth from the living arden of his soul living, fragrant, comely, nd fitting thought and speech wherewith o address his Heavenly Father, then what usiness has he up there in the pulpit, anding in the place of spiritual leader- ip in an intensely personal religion?

Well might the Apostle Paul have writ- n: "If I observe all the canonical hours, nd have memorized all their offices; if I y all the Psalms daily by heart; and n repeat every prayer in the Prayer ook from memory—and have not the liv- g Spirit of God within me, I am be- me a scratchy phonograph or a radio ull of static!"

What is the difference between carrying book in one's pocket and carrying a dio around? Or what *is* the difference tween a prayer book and a rosary?

My splendid young undertaker friend ked me some years ago: "What's wrong ith all these young ministers nowadays? Why do they have to read all their prayers ut of somebody's book? *If a minister oesn't know how to pray, there is some- ing the matter with him!* Do they all et their sermons the same way?" Then e added: "When my time comes for the uick ride in the long box, if the minister ust read his prayers out of a book, he n stay home that day, or go to the ball- ame. *I don't want him!*"

People notice, brethren!

Can it be that they do not swallow as ullibly as we do, the excuses, the subter- uges, and the substitutes with which we stify our untilled and prayer-barren earts?

"The hungry sheep look up—*and are ot fed!*"

III

How, then, shall we till our living souls, bring forth prayers with the precious agrance of living flowers?

If a minister, bent on "doing his per- nal devotions," drives himself to the gged observance of a dusty-bound, our-long, daily period in his study, per- rming certain variously recommended pious acts, which stand in no vital sequence or organic relation to each other, frustration will be the inevitable outcome. The things of the Kingdom of Heaven are not taken by force.

This is the law of the Kingdom of Heaven: "First the blade, then the ear, *after that* the full corn in the ear."

That simple and unbotanical statement of organic *sequence* is the law of all living things.

For example, "consider the lilies."

First, a pot of earth. Then, a living bulb, next, the stalk, the leaves, the buds. And *then* the pure glory of the Easter Lily!

A lily is a *result.*

It is a result of a living, dynamic *process.*

And the process works invariably in that order; invariably in that inseparable connection; and *invariably.* It is a law; and one can rely upon it.

So, if one wants a lily, he does not go to the glass flowers in the Harvard Museum, or to the pictures in the flower catalog.

A prayer is like a lily.

A prayer, too, is a result, the climax of a living process.

So, if one wants a prayer, he does not buy a prayer book, or a rosary, or a start-and-stop watch.

A minister's "devotions" ought to be as vivid and exhilarating as the work of a skilled gardener engaged in his greenhouse among his fragrant lilies, while each perfect chalice pours out its culminating perfume, fed from living roots deep in fertile soil.

A minister's "devotions" in his study will *be* like that—vivid and thrilling—if during that daily period he will firmly turn the key against all things routine and mechanical, and enter the profound spiritual experience of (as it were) walking the common road of life in the personal companionship of the Saviour of the world—a companionship just like the simple, natural communion of those two on the road to Emmaus, with their solemn

faces and holden eyes, their burdened and burning hearts. There in his private study ("closet," "secret place") let him join himself in the Spirit, an anonymous third with those unknown two, and add to theirs his day-by-day personal experiences and living cases and human problems, with deep concern like theirs, with deep and yearning hope like theirs, and with utter faith; and let him freely lay his problems one by one before his open Bible, and listen as the now invisible Saviour patiently begins again at Moses and all the prophets and expounds to *him* in all the Scriptures the inevitable sufferings and the inevitable glories which pertain to the world's salvation through the ages.

Out of profound Bible study—not just "reading"; reading is like *looking* at food, as compared with *eating* food—out of profound and prolonged and patient Bible *study,* there will gradually emerge not only light for the eyes, and answers for the mind, and comfort and peace for the heart, but sweet manna and rivers of living water—the promised nourishment of the daily growth of the soul that hungers and thirsts after righteousness. And at last, out of such rich experiences shall surely come singing words of faith and courage and joy and understanding, which shall compose themselves finally, *finally,* into a living prayer!

Whether in the pulpit or in the study, prayer is not a prelude but a climax; not a fixed formula but an organic growth; not a disconnected, recurrent appointment by the clock but the spontaneous culmination of a continuous process. Out of the universal materials of vital human life, nourished alike by adversity and success, illumined by the experience of divine revelation in conscience and Scripture, expressed with the native and spontaneous eloquence of intimacy and love, sincerity, assurance, and vivid reality, prayers that are alive should crown our ceaseless communion the way the fragrant blossoms crown the Regal Lily.

IV

"In hoc signo vinces."

Let us conquer by a *living* Spirit, pilgrims along the Road-of-the-Burning-Heart, preaching to all by the way the glad and sobering tidings of a living Kingdom that hath its foundations of such mercy and justice that all men without exception shall be either doomed or saved thereby; and daily renewing our own strength for such a ministry by secret-place prayer-communion with Him who is not the Lord of the dead, but the Lord of the living, and the Lord of Life Everlasting.

"Lord, teach us to pray."

"Putting the Gospel to Work"

Springfield Conference February 26, 1946

The Rev. Clarence W. Cranford, D.D.

Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, D. C.

IN February, 1934, there appeared in the *Reader's Digest* an article by Sir Wilfred Grenfell in which he said, "Looking back over my forty years' work in Labrador, I see now more clearly than ever before that a man's religion must be measured by what it enables him to do." On the basis of that criterion, Dr. Grenfell seems to have had hold of a pretty good religion.

There are two sides to the Christian gospel. One side is what God has done for us—and is still able to do. The other side is what he expects us to do for Him. "God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on

Him should not perish but have everlasting life"—that's one side. "Ye are my friends *if* ye *do* whatsoever I have commanded you"—that's the other.

We do well, therefore, to think of how we can try to put the gospel to work. I'm glad this conference has already given much attention to the place and importance of Christian doctrine. I once heard Dr. Shelton Smith of Duke University say that since the days of the Great Awakening, the Christian churches of America have been primarily concerned with developing themselves institutionally rather than in developing Christian experience in depth. If that is true, and I'm afraid there is a great deal of truth in it, perhaps one reason we may not have developed Christian experience in greater depth is that we have not given sufficient attention to the great basic convictions of the Christian faith.

Dr. S. Franklin Rall, in his book "According to Paul," says that Christianity is based on two things—a fact, and a faith. The fact is Christ; the faith is that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Dr. Ernest Scott says something of the same thing in his book on "The Varieties of New Testament Religion." He points out the disciples did not begin with a series of fine-spun religious theories and then proceed to think up situations to illustrate them. They began with a set of religious facts—Jesus had come and had lived among them; he taught them; he was crucified, and rose again; and through faith in him they entered into a new relationship with the Father. These facts they were then forced to interpret to themselves and the world.

We must never lose sight of the fact of Christ, and the faith that "God was in Him reconciling the world unto Himself." Jesus is not incidental to our message. He *is* our message. What Copernicus taught regarding the movements of the heavenly bodies is true or false regardless of who presented it. But one cannot dissociate Jesus from what he taught. He not only spoke of love; he said, "As I have loved you, love ye one another." He not only talked of God; he said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Jesus was not only the greatest teacher who ever lived. He himself was the greatest lesson he ever taught as he revealed the will and love of God to the world.

Having experienced that basic conviction, we then need to translate it into life and action. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" Moreover, it is when our convictions are translated into action the world begins to take notice. After the repeal of Prohibition, a newspaper editor in a Pennsylvania town sought to attract liquor advertisements by announcing a proposed cooking school sponsored by his paper for the purpose of teaching the women of the town how to cook with beer. One woman in that town had certain convictions about temperance which she proceeded to put into action. Calling ten women, she asked them each to call ten more and so on until they got enough women to call the editor of the newspaper at five-minute intervals all one day to protest the idea of such a school being held. The school was not held. Action won the day. How, then, can we put the Christian gospel to work so that the world can see some of the results?

I

In the first place, as ministers surely we need to put the gospel to work in our own personal devotional life. If we are not doing as much as we should to develop Christian experience in depth in others, perhaps we had better start with ourselves to see what we are doing to deepen our own sense of the presence of God. In the City of Richmond, Virginia, many years ago, two neighboring ministers got together every Monday morning. They ate breakfast together, and then spent the rest of the morning in Bible study and prayer. In my own city there are two small groups of ministers, which meet periodically for a similar purpose. After breakfast, they spend an hour or more

in Bible reading, meditation and prayer. Another group of ministers comes together an hour each week for intensive Bible study feeling that, as they get nearer to the Word of God, they experience a greater sense of his power. Some ministers are developing "prayer cells" in their church, getting little groups of people together who are willing to practice the presence of God through prayer. Certainly such experiences tend to increase an awareness of God, and are one area in which we need to try to put the gospel to work.

Again, we need to help our people to put the gospel to work in sharing their Christian experience with others. In Dr. Ernest M. Lyon's book, "The Psychology of Christian Personality," the author suggests that the fourth beatitude should be translated to read, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be well-nourished." There is a difference between just being filled and being well-nourished. In some parts of Europe, parents are able to fill their children's stomachs with rutabagas which they grow in great quantities. In that way the children escape the pangs of hunger, but, lacking a variety of foods, they are tragically undernourished.

Certain foods are staples in any average diet. Many people, for example, would not consider they had eaten a meal without bread and butter. And they go together. Two items that must never be left out of any program that seeks to nourish the total life of the individual are Evangelism and Christian teaching. And they go together. Evangelism should be educational to be effective; Christian teaching must be evangelistic in spirit and purpose. Together they offer an opportunity to the Christian to grow.

Now, Evangelism can never be reduced to one formula any more than bread is always made by the same recipe. But why have we gotten so far away from the kind of Evangelism Jesus himself inaugurated when he sent the disciples out two by two to win others into the kingdom? Nothing can serve better to whet the appetite of those who have already tasted and seen that the Lord is good than to seek to share their experiences with others.

II

That must have been a great day in Jesus' experience when the disciples he had sent out two by two came back to report. Remember, he had forbade them to carry extra clothing or money with them so that they would recognize completely their dependence upon God and upon the hospitality of those to whom they went. When they came back, Jesus asked them, "When I sent you out without purse, or scrip, or shoes, lacked ye anything?" And their answer was, "nothing." So great had been their joy in sharing their new-found experience of Christ, they failed to sense any great need for material comforts. So pleased was Jesus at their report that we are told he "leaped in the Spirit."

Why have we not made every Christian feel his responsibility to share his Christian faith with others? They attend church service and feel they have fulfilled their obligation to the Kingdom of God. They are filled with inspiring sermons, but do not translate their inspiration into the act of seeking to win others to the Christian way of life.

In our church there is a group of workers who go out two by two to call on prospects for Christian discipleship. To go in pairs gives them more confidence. As they go, they are instructed to keep three assumptions in mind. First, they are to assume the prospect has had some kind of a Christian experience in the past. If that proves not to be the case, they assume that at least the prospect had some Christian teaching as a child. If he can be made to talk about those early experiences, the interviewer wins a real psychological advantage, for in imagination the prospect is a child again and thus becomes more receptive to an invitation to Christian discipleship. If neither of those

assumptions is true, one can always press the claims of Christ upon the individual. It is always well to talk Christ rather than the church. If one is looking for an excuse for not committing himself to the Christian life, he may know something about the church to criticize. He cannot so easily find things to criticize about the Saviour of men.

III

Finally, we need to put the gospel to work in the area of justice and brotherhood in human relations. Each week in thousands of schools across this nation, children stand and salute the American flag. And as they do, they repeat, "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands; one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

If they have any grasp at all of the meaning of the words they are saying, they would recognize that the last phrase of the pledge, "with liberty and justice for all" is one of the greatest concepts ever to enter the mind of man. Our American democracy is based on that concept. As Dr. E. Stanley Jones points out, it was conceived in the *Mayflower* compact, born in Rhode Island, grew up among the Quakers of Pennsylvania, and was legalized in Thomas Jefferson.

Now we need to help it to reach maturity. For any one who knows conditions at all, knows that America still has a long way to go fully to realize that ideal. This is not yet a land of equal justice, let alone brotherhood, for all. Is it equal justice for 15 per cent of the people to own about 85 per cent of the wealth of America? Do all men, regardless of race or creed, have equal opportunity to develop and use their God-given talents?

These are questions Christian people need to ask, for nothing will serve more quickly to discredit the church in the eyes of a great many people than for them to get the idea the church is not interested in their sufferings. "All suffering is bitter," says Dr. Bruner in his book, "Justice and the Social Order," "but unjust suffering is doubly bitter." And the church that does not keep in touch with the common people, and be conversant with and concerned about their problems, will not be able to win men to the gospel of the grace of God as revealed in Christ, our Lord. "Who is weak," cried Paul, "and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not?" And Jesus said at the outset of his ministry, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

IV

What, then, can and should the church do to put the gospel to work in the realm of human relationships? To begin with, it can denounce all forms of injustice and discrimination that prevent men from living together as brothers in the family of God. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," wrote Paul to the Ephesians, "but rather reprove them."

There is certainly precedent for this in the prophets. Listen to Amos condemning the money-mad people of his generation, so desirous of making profits that he said they coveted even the dirt off the heads of the poor as soil in which to grow more wheat from the sale of which to make more money. No wonder Amaziah said, "The land is not able to bear all his words."

Or hear Micah as he cries, "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

In the city where I live is the site of the Walter Reed General Hospital of the

army. Often, as I drive past it, I am reminded of the young army surgeon who in the Spanish-American war risked his life to discover the cause of yellow-fever. But equally important with his discovery that it was a certain mosquito that carried the parasite that caused this dread disease, was the work of the army engineers who drained the swamps that were the breeding places of the mosquitoes.

It is the duty of the church to expose and denounce every vice and social condition that is a breeding place for frustration and despair and moral delinquency. It must raise its voice against an age that is more concerned with making money than with redeeming men—with pride of race than with the practice of brotherhood.

Again, it is the duty of the church to demonstrate a way of life, and a concept of justice and brotherhood that is based on the spirit and the teachings of Jesus.

Why did Jesus pick the men he did to be his disciples? They were certainly not men of prestige or influence. They were only fishermen, tax-collectors, and the like. But Walter Rauschenbusch says he was initiating a new order of leadership in the world; an order of leadership that would serve and not exploit. "Ye know," said Jesus to the disciples, "that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be chiefest, shall be the servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

And how was that to be done? "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Whatever else that means, surely it means that the Christian must demand for every other person the same rights and advantages he asks for himself. John L. Alexander once challenged some young people to think of all the people in their community, from the richest to the poorest, and then for each to ask himself the question, "How far am I willing to go to demand for every other person the same advantages I ask for myself?" "How far do I think Jesus would go?" Perhaps this is the place at which we ought to begin in trying to put the gospel to work in human relationship.

Finally, however, the church must call men back to God, who is the source of all true justice and brotherhood. Why do we even think all men are worthy of justice and brotherhood? What is justice? Is it nothing more than our own highest standards? If so, God pity the world, for how just are we apt to be who are so filled with pride and greed, and a sense of our own importance?

Micah did not begin by asking men to practice justice. He began by asking, "What doth the Lord require of thee?" Jesus did not begin by telling men to love their neighbor. He first said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." It is *His* justice we are to seek. It is *He* who requires justice and mercy of us. It is *His* character and love revealed in the life and death of Christ our Lord that enables us to see what justice and mercy are. It is *His* kingdom we must seek first, knowing that if we do, justice and brotherhood in human relationships will be added unto us.

Dr. James H. Franklin, formerly president of Crozer Theological Seminary, once spoke of the "City of God." His closing remarks apply to us who would put the gospel to work in human relationships. "The City of God," he said, "is out ahead. We will not enter it in our generation. But please God when we fall, we will fall with our faces toward it."

Connecticut Recruits for the Ministry

Carl A. Hansen

Associate in Religious Education, Hartford, Conn.

"AND into what branch of agriculture do you plan to go when you finish your college work, John? Animal husbandry, perhaps?" asked the interviewer.

I had turned on my car radio as I drove to visit one of our churches and was listening to interviews with prize-winning members of the Department of Agriculture of the University of Connecticut at Storrs. To other winners the same question had been put with answers covering general and specialized fields of agriculture from general farming to intensive research. Now I listened with keener interest for John, a senior at the University, was one of our own Pilgrim Fellowshippers. His answer did not surprise me, but it caught the interviewer completely unawares. Said John, "I am going to be a Congregational missionary."

One of twenty young people gathered in a Conference on Christian Vocation some months before, John had not then been asked for a decision, nor had he offered one. And yet, John's announcement was no surprise. Others before him had arrived at similar decisions as a result of their participation in a Conference on Christian Vocation.

It all began this way. . . . A few years ago, at a meeting of Congregational ministers in Hartford, the usual small talk was going on and in the midst of it one man said, "Just for the fun of it, let's see how many of us entered the Congregational ministry from other churches." A small minority had been Congregationalists previous to entering upon a Congregational ministry. As former Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Disciples' backgrounds were revealed laughter grew. To the mind of one man, one who had "always been a Congregationalist," it was no laughing matter, however. To him it seemed that Congregationalism was seriously remiss in meeting its responsibilities and too ready to rely on others to recruit and train its ministers. He soon proposed the first step in a plan of attack.

"Let there be gathered together at least once each year," he suggested, "those young people who need to be challenged with a call to full-time Christian service. Let them be the best young people we can find and let them meet with the best of our most consecrated leaders. . . ."

Into the hands of the Religious Education Committee and the Committee on the Ministry of the Connecticut Conference was placed this seed-thought. Its first fruit was a cottage meeting at Storrs, Connecticut, in the fall of 1943—a meeting in charge of the minister proposing it. Summer youth conference deans were asked for the names of young people who had indicated an interest in full-time Christian service and those who should be so challenged whether they had indicated an interest or not. A letter was addressed to these people stating frankly the purpose of the meeting and inviting them to attend at their own expense.

Arrangements for the meeting place and the employment of a cook were given to one minister's charge, program matters went to another, and the Conference Director of Religious Education made the contacts with the young people. Insistence upon a meeting place where telephone calls could not interfere and where the entire group could live together in reasonable comfort for a time paid well in the fellowship achieved and the work done. The cabin rented was the property of the Congregational Church at Storrs and admirably suited to the purpose.

Space limitations and the decision to

keep young people in the majority, caused the Committee to limit adult leadership as much as possible consistent with getting the job done. To represent the field of religious education a splendid woman, the director in one of the churches, was invited. She also served as "dean" of girls. One person wise in the many aspects of missionary service was sought and called into service again. Another leader well versed in supervisory and administrative religious work, such as the Conference superintendent or his associate, was considered necessary. And, most important of all, a strong minister known to do a grand work in a local parish and who had "what it takes" to appeal to young people was given general charge. Such a faculty decided upon for the first conference has been typical of the two succeeding meetings also, with others invited in just for an evening or a morning session.

The program pattern established at the first meeting has also proved time-worthy, with only minor changes later. Friday evening opened with outdoor and indoor fun for the early-comers, followed by fellowship at the supper table. Introductions, banter and an exchange of jokes preceded the "getting-down-to-business" about the fireplace after supper. Along about eight o'clock, the leader explained the purpose of the gathering and started off a discussion of the meaning and thrills of Christian service, and the need for recruits. Other leaders told of their own calls to service and testified to their experiences. Time was allowed for interjections, comments, and questions by all. Good nights were preceded by a carefully planned worship service by candle and firelight.

The ready acceptance and discharge of responsibility by the newly-gathered community after breakfast, found the group ready for an early resumption of the conference the next morning. Brief worship opened the session which was given over to exploring as many of the fields of Christian service as the knowledge and experience of the leaders would allow. Needs for service, the personal qualifications necessary, the education and training required, and the importance of deep personal consecration were carefully dealt with. Frequent questions interrupted leaders as they told of the varied work and much discussion followed each point. The joys and the heartaches of the ministry were faced. Pertinent literature had been gathered previous to the meeting and was given to the group. Since no one was expected to commit himself to the ministry at this meeting, and since it was to be expected that many of them would not enter full-time Christian service, the importance of the Christian layman was not overlooked.

Time was allowed for recreation before lunch, and for individuals to talk with leaders privately.

The conference closed shortly after lunch with a very simple and most meaningful round-table service of Holy Communion and consecration.

Always there has been in the minds of the Committee the desire that the Conference on Christian Vocation should be so meaningful and valuable in itself that it should afford a complete experience of worship and consecration, significant to those who should not again meet in such a group or enter into the Christian ministry, as well as to offer such an experience and vocational guidance to those who should enter full-time Christian service. Subsequent letters from young people and parents give adequate assurance that this has been accomplished.

In preparation for the third Conference on Christian Vocation this last November, ministers were invited to join summer conference leaders in recommending young people for the meeting. As has been the case before, only those young people in the eleventh grade and above have been invited and yet the affirmative response was so large as to make a second conference necessary this year. Since 1943 forty-five different young people have attended these conferences. Of these, six

boys and seven girls are either already in-care-of-association" and at seminaries, taking college work in religious education. John is one of these boys.

This is Connecticut's first new attack on the problem of recruiting for the ministry and has been rewarding enough to warrant extension. Matters of follow-up, which now take the form of letters to home church ministers and personal correspondence with leaders, need to be studied and developed to a much larger degree.

Catching His Spirit

In the days of Raphael there was a young student painter who had unusual promise. His friends urged him to establish his own studio and seek for himself fame and fortune. To his admirers he said: "I am not anxious to found a school nor to live in a palace, but I am anxious to catch Raphael's spirit and to reproduce his ideals." As regards Christ, that should be our attitude, *To Catch His Spirit and to Reproduce His Ideals.* Paul recognized this as his objective, for he said, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." What was this "mind" which was in Christ Jesus? It was the great indwelling Spirit of God. Now, God is love; therefore the spirit which animated Jesus was the Spirit of Love. This spirit seeks expresion in every life.

One April morning a boy felt Spring in the air. It had come so quickly and so silently that he had not noticed it before. But from his bedroom window the sight of bursting buds, opening flowers and green grass sent him speeding to his grandmother's room with the cry: "Grandma, wake up, wake up! The world is just beginning!" So with the coming of Christ; it was a new beginning in an old world. With His advent in any life there is a new moral and spiritual climate, a new valution of personality, a new release of power.

The feeling is like that of the Scottish lad who climbed with his Dad to a high elevation from which he could see in every direction. The view was magnificent, overpowering. They were silent for a while, then the father said: "See, Jamie, the love of God is as wide as yon horizons." Jamie pondered the vast idea. His face brightened as he said, "Then, father, I am right in the middle of God's love!"

When one is in the middle of God's love, he cannot be a solitary Christian. Christianity is a fellowship; it is the fellowship of all believers. To be a Christian means not only to believe in Christ as Lord and Savior, but to be within a brotherhood. Our fellowship in the Church grows out of our fellowship with Christ, and this fellowship rises above all barriers, is greater than all creed, has in it the seeds of oneness.

The test of the Church is the mind of Christ. The Church of which He is the head is the most friendly spot on earth. But our man-made churches miss the mark. We forget; not that we mean to, but we do. Often we are unchristian. We speak hastily, carelessly, thoughtlessly. We do things that a true Christian would not do. Then the spirit of doubt, or suspicion or ill will replaces the spirit of love and fellowship, and the Spirit of Christ is driven out. Let it not be so with us who crave His spirit and covet for our world His ideals. "We must work the works of Him that sent us while it is day—the night cometh."

The Rev. Olin B. Tracy,
Melrose, Mass.

God's Timepiece

A Communion Meditation

The Rev. Robert Clyde Yarbrough, Ph.D.

Minister, The Second Church in Newton, West Newton, Massachusetts

ONE of the things that came to our house during the Christmas season was a small clock with a luminous dial. It is not the ordinary illuminated clock, however. It will not always tell time in the dark, as does the usual illuminated timepiece. It will do so only when it has been in the presence of a strong light for several hours before darkness comes on. If it stays away from the light too long, its luminosity fades completely and it becomes like any ordinary clock which ticks loudly but will not tell time in the dark.

Well, these small clocks of our little lives by themselves never can tell time; they can only *reflect* the time of Big Ben —Christ Himself, whose coming into the world divided time into B.C. and A.D. In a book just published by Macmillan with the interesting sub-title of "You *Can* Change Human Nature," there is a helpful chapter on achieving marital happiness, in which this statement appears: "Don't be merely a reflector of your mate's glory; do a little shining of your own."

That may be excellent marital advice. But it will not hold when applied to our lives as God's timepiece. The only way we can ever shine is to walk in His light until we become illuminated by His glow. We never can shine on our own, any more than can the moon. It shines only as it reflects the greater light of the sun; we shine only as we reflect the greater glory of our Lord and Master, only as we are willing to become the illuminated dial on His face revealing the presence and position of the hands of His Spirit at any given moment of the day or night.

Moreover, our ability to become such illuminated dials depends upon our willingness to live in His presence, just as the power of the little clock at our house to tell time in the *dark* depends upon the amount of time it has spent in the *light*. If we refuse to come into His presence often enough and to stay long enough we lose not only the power to tell time altogether but the ability to reflect His time. That is why church going and regular devotional reading and meditation are necessary aspects of the Christian life. "We have to be continually reminded of what we believe" or we cease to believe it. No belief once accepted will *"automatically* remain alive in the mind." It must be nurtured. That is why we come to this table at regular intervals: we come to feed our faith on the things for which this sacrament stands; we come to expose our spirits to the penetrating and saving light of Him whose life and teachings whose death and resurrection this sacrament symbolizes; we come to renew the luminosity of our Christian dials; to increase our candle power, to enlarge our wattage capacity, to recharge our power to reflect His Spirit in a dark world.

What does being Christian mean except to reflect the spirit of Christ; to incarnate the qualities of Christ; to exemplify, objectify, make concrete in flesh and blood the purposes of Christ? Being Christian is to become a torch, glowing with His flame; a radiator, radiating His warmth; a magnet, magnetized by His power; a dial which, impregnated with the rays of His spirit, shines with the illumination of His presence in the darkness as well as in the light—proclaiming His time to all the world. Being Christian is to act as God's timepiece, becoming as the fourth gospel puts it, "witnesses of the light."

Some of you have heard the story of the Sunday School lad who when asked

define the word "deacon" recalled his
her telling him that the airplane signal
ht near their home was a "beacon" and,
coming confused in the similarity of
sound of "B" and "D," he replied:
deacon is a light set on a hill." It is
erfect answer. A deacon, a Christian,
light set on a hill reflecting the Great
ht, indicating the course of the Chris-
n flight.

Wherever else that course leads, it does
go in the direction of merely believ-
a creed or following a ritual or ob-
ving a custom. It leads to living a life
illuminated life which shines with
inner radiance which comes from di-
contact with the "Son." Without the
ng of such a life all correct genuflect-
and mumbling of creeds and turning
prayer wheels is mere ticking in the
k. Let your light so shine before men
t they may know the meaning of God's
nutes and may never have to say:
'hat time is it?" And that God may
er have to say: "My watch has
pped."

According to one of the apocryphal
iters Jesus once said, "I am the fire.
that keepeth close to me shall keep
rm." Well, only those who remain
se to Him can ever hope to become
ough like Him to be His reflectors.
e dials of our lives can glow with His Spirit only as they are warmed by His presence. The thing we do this morning, therefore, in coming to this table, while nothing new or startling, while ancient and simple, is nonetheless essential and basic if we are to be God's timepiece. We come to kneel in His presence that we may become like Him. We come to warm our hearts at His flame that we may set the world on fire. We come to expose the dials of our lives to the rays of His hope and courage, His sacrifice and love, His faith and loyalty, that when we return to the world we may reflect these elements of the Son of God. We come to be *set* as God's timepiece, that the world in the dark year ahead may be able to tell what time it is.

I bid you come then to this Holy Sacrament in quiet confidence, in joyous expectancy, in complete surrender, in full exposure and lay the dial of your lives in its bright light; that you may be renewed, recharged, *rewound* and thus enabled to return to the world with whatever degree of the darkness of sorrow and grief, of loneliness and sin, of weakness or despair may be your lot and *reflect* in that darkness the light of gladness and hope, of fellowship and forgiveness, of strength and assurance which streams from this sacrament. Ye are God's timepiece: let your dial glow!

A Flower Service

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
FAULKTON—SOUTH DAKOTA
REVEREND JACK COSTIKYAN, MINISTER

August 19, 1945. 11:00 A.M.

ORDER OF SERVICE

PRELUDE	Piano
PROCESSIONAL	1. Holy, Holy, Holy
CALL	Psalms 104:24. How Manifold Are Thy Works
DOXOLOGY	Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow

INVOCATION	The Beauty of This Season
PRAYER	Lord's. Our Father Who Art in Heaven
GLORIA	Glory Be to the Father
RESPONSIVE	Litany for Flowers
EXPLANATION	Flower Arrangement in the Church
HYMN	Tune 168-Dix. For the Beauty of the Flowers
SCRIPTURE	Luke 12:22-31. Be Not Anxious
PRAYER	The Flowers of the Fields
RESPONSE	536. Hear Our Prayer, O Lord
READING	Song. If I Were a Rose
CHOIR	473. We Plow the Fields and Scatter
NOTICES	Church and Others
OFFERING	For Current Expenses of Church
PRAYER	The Beauty of Giving
HYMN	464. This Is My Father's World
SERMON	Arrayed Like One of These
HYMN	454. Come, Ye Thankful People, Come
DISTRIBPTION	One Flower to Each Person
BENEDICTION	I Timothy 1:17. The King Eternal
CHOIR	Threefold Amen
POSTLUDE	Piano

FLOWER COMMITTEE : Mrs. George Kutschke, Mrs. Ray Kellett
Former Member : Mrs. George Zaelke

LITANY FOR FLOWERS

MINISTER : Let us thank God.
For the beautiful flowers.
PEOPLE : Thank God for flowers.
MINISTER : For the delicate lilies.
PEOPLE : Thank God for lilies.
MINISTER : For the fragrant roses.
PEOPLE : Thank God for roses.
MINISTER : For the pleasant plants.
PEOPLE : Thank God for plants.
MINISTER : For the lovely shrubs.
PEOPLE : Thank God for shrubs.
MINISTER : For the green herbs.
PEOPLE : Thank God for herbs.
MINISTER : For the white fields.
PEOPLE : Thank God for fields.
MINISTER : For the fruitful seeds.

PEOPLE : Thank God for seeds.
MINISTER : For the majestic trees.
PEOPLE : Thank God for trees.
MINISTER : For the plentiful fruits.
PEOPLE : Thank God for fruits.
MINISTER : For the varied vegetables.
PEOPLE : Thank God for vegetables.
MINISTER : For the colorful gardens.
PEOPLE : Thank God for gardens.
MINISTER : For all these things.
PEOPLE : Thank God for all.
ALL : Amen.

FOR THE BEAUTY OF THE FLOWERS

The Pilgrim Hymnal, Tune 168. Dix

1. For the beauty of the flowers,
And their fineness of design,
For the glory of their colors,
And their fragrance so divine—

2. For the splendor of the gardens,
Lilies, roses, plants, and shrubs,
Herbs, and fields, and seeds, and trees,
Fruits, vegetables, all these—

REFRAIN

God, to thee our voice we raise
In this song of thankful praise.

Flower Arrangement in the Church

By Mrs. George Kutschke

In the arrangement of the flowers today, we have tried to group them in such a manner that the thoughts portrayed from the array of flowers, leads to our lighted cross.

We have used twenty-seven varieties of flowers in this arrangement, most of them being seasonable flowers, and from the gardens of our parish members.

God has given us so many beautiful flowers. Each one has a season of its own, as well as a special message for us. Shall we start with the poinsettia. The flower we have for Christ's birthday, so bright and beautiful, red and green.

Then we have the beautiful Easter Lily. The snow white petals and the heart of gold. The message it brings to us, shall I tell you? The white purity of the petals tells us we must live pure clean lives or we can never walk on the streets of gold.

There is the "Resurrection Plant," so

called because of its being dormant during the winter season, and at Eastertime its green leaves appear and soon thereafter, it has a mass of purple flowers.

I can never look at the fuchsia but I bow my head with sorrow. It is the one flower that I know causes sadness. It was found first at the foot of the cross. It represents drops of Christ's blood shed on the cross for you and me and the blossom bows its head in sorrow. It has no perfume.

Now, we have one of the most beautiful of God's messengers, the rose. As we bend our head to caress and get close to its heart, we find such fragrance and perfume, we are reminded that, "the heart of the rose is the perfume it gives."

The Mignonette, the little Scotch flower, means Love.

Then there is the Moon Flower or Gabriel's Trumpet, so called because of its pure white trumpet-shaped flowers.

Young Joseph of the coat of many colors, was sold into Egypt, we learn in childhood, and when at last he found favor in Pharoah's sight, he was clothed in fine linen. Thus the growing and spinning and weaving of flax go far back in the world's history. This same flax which provides the fiber for linen and the seeds for linseed oil, and is grown on a vast scale for that purpose, is found as well in the flower garden, admired for the airy daintiness of its stalks and the pretty blueness of its abundant, one-day flowers.

Chinese bee keepers, some thousands of years ago, observed their bees hovering about a tall rose pink wild flower. During all the time of its blooming the bees deserted other flowers for this one, so the Chinese gathered its seeds and planted them near the hives to further their honey crop. Thus for utility the hollyhock was first cultivated, and perhaps for two thousand years it was grown only for the sake of the bees. However, the hollyhock is a native of Syria and Greece as well as China. And when England received its first hollyhocks, in order to distinguish this plant from another well known plant called "hock-leaf," used for medicinal purposes, the new flower became the "holy-hock," because it is said it reached England from the Holy Land.

The Calendulas of Southern Europe were the marigolds known to the ancients. And Calendula means, "little first day of the month," for as each month was ushered in by the calendar some of these little yellow flowers were in bloom. For many centuries the Calendula was called "gold-flower," but in medieval days, when the belief was strong in devils and demons, and it was most convenient to associate plants with the Virgin Mary, the gold flower became Mary's gold, and that name through the years was easily slurred into Marigold. It was thought that the Virgin Mary had once worn the flower.

Flowers are words which even a babe may understand.

More on the Pastor's Devotional Life

The Rev. Roland D. Sawyer

Ware, Mass.

I WAS much impressed by the item on "The Pastor's Devotional Life," in the February QUARTERLY, by Rev. Kenneth E. Seim.

I think he brought before us something so many busy pastors have overlooked. I have been a Congregational pastor for forty-eight years, and my life has been such that I could spend much time browsing around the Boston second-hand book stores, and I have beside my bed two long shelves that contain a very good collection of the devotional writings.

John Woolman and Thomas à Kempis

e splendid; I have several editions of
h, and their text never loses its stimulus.
Beside his devotional spirit, Woolman is
e of our best writers to give us an in-
ht into what life was in England and
nerica in his day.

Fifty-two years ago I began my devo-
nal readings at morning and night, and
w when I am seventy-two years of age,
w "it pays off," as the expression is. In
l age, there is no staff like it. For
rning devotional reading I confine my-
f to a Psalm, the New Testament, and
rayer from a prayer-book, or "Book of
ayers." I many years used the English
ook of Common Prayer," but the past
eral years I have read day by day from
ary Wilber Tileston's "Prayers, Ancient
d Modern."

When I retire at night, I take from
y shelves, for a half hour reading, any
the books there. Most often I take St.
ancis, Kempis, Woolman, David Brain-
d, the English Prayer Book, and close
ith a Psalm or two.

After all, the great book of devotion,
at has stood the test of the centuries, is
e Book of Psalms. I have been through
ores of translations and arrangements of
he Psalms, but find no text like the King
mes version, and I have made my own
rrangement, eliminating the merely his-
ric places, where the writer does not
ring to us a spiritual message that fits
to the teaching of Jesus.

These Psalms were in use among the
ebrew pious people of the Second Tem-
le, thus the spiritual heritage of those
ho had fresh before them the Prophets.
hey were the great book with our an-
estors who settled America.

May I set forth my daily devotional
abits?

When I awake in the morning, I repeat from the Third Psalm—

"Thou God, art a Shield about me,
My glory and the One who lifteth up my head.
I laid me down and slept—
I awake, Thou hast sustained me—
Salvation belongeth unto the Lord,
His blessing is upon His children."

I then switch on the light and read the prayer of the day from Mary Tileston's collection, read a chapter from the New Testament, then kneel and repeat the First or 23rd or 24th or 19th Psalm, closing with Psa. 118:24—

"This is the day that the Lord hath made,
I will rejoice and be glad in it."

At night, after my reading, I switch off the light, and repeat the Fourth Psalm, which ends with the words—

"I will lay me down in peace and sleep,
For Thou, Lord, makest me to dwell in safety."

When I start my sermon work in my study, or my piece of biblical study, I do so with the prayer of Samuel Johnson, in the Tileston collection. It runs thus:

"Almighty God, Our Heavenly Father, without whose help labor is useless, without whose light search is vain, invigorate my studies, direct my inquiries, that I may, by due diligence and right discernment, establish myself and others in Thy Holy Faith.

Take not, O Lord, Thy Holy Spirit from me; let not evil thoughts have dominion over my mind. Let me not linger in ignorance, but enlighten and support me, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord—Amen."

Rural Congregational Churches and Ministers

By One of Them

WHAT is wrong with rural Congregational churches? For more than two decades rural ministers have read denominational literature complaining about weak leadership in the rural churches. During this period there has been a continuous flow of complaints about over-lapping churches. Rural church problems will never be solved by denominational policies designed to eliminate so-called weak ministers or to eliminate so-called over-lapping churches. It is time to make a new approach to the problems of rural churches. There are some things wrong with rural Congregational churches.

The first and most serious thing wrong with rural churches is the lack of debate for or against denominational policies which affect rural churches. Denominational policies are created by national committees or by state conference committees. Delegates attending the associations are asked to approve of the policies. Rural pastors rarely ever debate a policy handed down from the urban-controlled state and national committees. Usually they vote upon the measure without enthusiasm and then register their disapproval in places where the superintendent will not be able to spot any individual opposition to the state and national program of denominational activity. The rural pastor has learned to keep his thoughts to himself when he attends Associational meetings. It is a very unhealthy condition. Rural pastors need the assurance that reprisals will not be administered if they oppose denominational policies which may be detrimental to their interests. Debate is vital for a healthy condition in a democratic organization.

* * *

The second thing wrong with rural churches is the absence of competent denominational leadership. The capable superintendent can solve many of the serious problems with credit to himself and with a blessing to the churches and their pastors. For example, let us assume that he has one hundred and fifty rural churches in his conference. In normal times about one-third of the churches will change pastorates each year. Over a five-year period pastoral changes will average about thirty per year. Of the thirty pastoral changes about ten new pastors will face problems which the superintendent should help solve before the pastorate begins. The reason he doesn't make an effort to create better conditions for the beginning of the pastorate is that he is indifferent toward the needs of the pastors or that he is not capable as a superintendent.

Too often he covers his weakness by making complaints about the inefficiency of his pastors. When a problem church solicits the help of the superintendent in securing a pastor he is in a position to visit the church during the week. He has a wonderful opportunity to meet with the church officers at a time when they cannot burden him with a lot of petty complaints about their pastor. He can if he is a capable leader tactfully inspect the parsonage and the church and make a number of recommendations for property improvements to lead to a happy beginning of a new pastorate. He should know something of a woman's taste for an attractive kitchen, a decent bathroom, a clean basement, and a useful attic. He should have the ability to recommend attractive improvements for the church building.

A few years ago a very capable Baptist executive-secretary made a rule to visit any church that requested his services within four days. When asked about giving proper time to the work of the Northern Baptist Convention and following such a strenuous program with reference to the churches in his state, he replied "I brush my desk clear of the numerous details of the Northern Baptist Conven-

n and go where the Lord calls me." He ped make strong churches out of weak urches. Congregational superintendents n help make strong churches out of ak churches if they will heed the call the Lord.

* * *

A third thing wrong with rural pastoral rk is a very poor placement service. n beyond fifty years of age become inionated. They are not good coun-lors. Their minds are not open. Rural stors need a better set-up in the place-nt offices. The men occupying these ces should be between thirty and forty rs of age. They should go back to the torate after seven years of service.

In conclusion. There are weak rural pastors. In spite of their weakness they can often render a good service with sympathetic denominational leadership. The rural pastorate requires an objective personality, substantial preaching ability, administrative leadership, and the grit to live on an inadequate income. It is a lonesome life because the denomination seldom honors the service with an impressive committee appointment.

[The Editor publishes this contribution on conditions affecting the Rural Church with a certain hesitation, and yet with the feeling that there is some basis for the writer's criticisms. The name is withheld, but the writer has instructed the Editor to reveal it 'to any one who requests it."]

"We Sing Our Creed"

A Hymn Festival
adapted for
The Morning Worship Service

Rev. Lawrence E. Tenhopen
First Congregational Church, South Haven, Michigan

RGAN PRELUDE

ALL TO WORSHIP by the Minister
"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."—Colossians 3:16.

ROCESSIONAL HYMN: "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past"

NVOCATION and LORD'S PRAYER

LORIA PATRI

NTRODUCTION:

This Hymn Festival today is an experiment. If you like it, we can make it an nnual event. Your minister will welcome iticisms and suggestions for the improvement of such a service in the future. You will have the opportunity to sing e grand old hymns of the church, the hymns that inspired the faith of our fathers, and that can uphold us in our day of need.

The theme of the service is, "We Sing Our Creed." This creed will include statements which a vital faith in Christianity should proclaim. For the hymn-writers, as well as the theologians and the preachers, have written on a variety of subjects. There is poetic and musical expression for every mood.

(For the rest of this service, we will remain seated except for the Doxology and closing hymn. The choirs will have two numbers each, which will give the rest of us a chance to catch our breath. We'll have to presume that choir members like to sing; at least, we shall keep them busy today. Be ready to sing the hymns as indicated; there will be only a short introduction by the organ. Let us all take part heartily.)

"WE BELIEVE IN GOD"

This is the fundamental belief of religion; the starting point of faith, the first word of our credo.

Our processional hymn was a song of praise to God, the Creator and Sustainer of life:

"Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while life shall last,
And our eternal home."

We come together to worship God, to sing His praises, to seek His will, to dedicate ourselves to His way.

God is revealed through nature—rocks, trees, skies, seas, the singing of the birds, the dawn of a new day.

"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." (Psalm 24:1.)

God is revealed in the moral force of life. He is on the side of right; He is opposed to wrong. He shall bring in His kingdom of righteousness and goodness.

Rev. M. D. Babcock, a minister of city churches, but one who had great love for the country, who went on long hikes that he might be in the midst of the beauty of God's world, wrote this Hymn.

Let us sing, "This Is My Father's World."

"WE BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST"

God is revealed best of all in the highest expression of humanity, Jesus Christ. So perfectly did Jesus embody the thoughts and ideals of God, that he is called "the Son of God" and "the revelation of the Father."

Jesus lived in Palestine. Because He lived there, the country has been called, "the Holy Land." There he taught the twelve; there he laid the foundations of a world religion.

We follow in His way and call ourselves, "Christians." We are followers of the Christ in our quest for God. To him we make a pledge of devotion, pure, warm, and changeless. We call Him the "Lamb of Calvary."

Let us sing, "My Faith Looks Up to Thee" (verses 1 and 2).

The Crusader's Hymn, or to call it by title, "Fairest Lord Jesus," was written in 1677. The tune by which we know it best, the Silesian Folk Song, was used first in 1850, at the time of its translation into English. As we sing it, or hear it sung, we would do well to think of Hofmann's picture of Christ, the boy of twelve in the temple. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:52.)

The Junior Choir will sing, "Fairest Lord Jesus."

"WE BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT"

This completes the Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; God in three persons. This is the Comforter that Jesus promised would come to the disciples. This is the spirit of love, of conscience; this is our comprehension of the best and the highest.

We have a lovely hymn of devotion:

"Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly thine,
Till all this earthly part of me
Glows with Thy fire divine."

Let us sing, "Breathe on me, Breath of God."

"WE BELIEVE IN THE BIBLE"

This is the Book of God: a Book of the history of the search for God; a Book of instruction with its commandments and laws; a Book of devotion, a prayer book. It contains the spiritual biography of saints and martyrs. In it we find the story of Jesus and the disciples, of Paul and other early missionaries.

Let us read a Psalm of praise, a word from the Book of God. "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised."

(Read Psalm 145) *Scripture.*

We sing about the Bible:

"O Word of God incarnate, O wisdom
from on high,

truth unchanged, unchanging, O Light
of our dark sky;
We praise Thee for the radiance that
from the hallowed page,
lantern to our footsteps, shines on
from age to age."

Such a hymn could get its inspiration
m the passage of the Bible, "Thy word
lamp unto my feet, and a light unto
path." (Psalm 119:105.)
Let us sing, "O Word of God Incar-
" (verses 1 and 2).

"E BELIEVE IN PRAYER"

Prayer is the way to God. Through
yer we feel close to Him; we learn His
; we ask His forgiveness; we request
guidance and strength.
The hymn, "What a Friend we have
Jesus" is often the first hymn which
sionaries teach their converts. The
hor, Joseph Scriven, following the
gic death of a loved one, devoted his
to others. Once a man wanted to hire
n to do some work. A friend answered
inquiry: "You cannot hire that man.
saw wood only for poor widows and
k people who are unable to pay."
Let us sing, "What a Friend we have
Jesus."

PASTORAL PRAYER: Choral re-
onse.

VE BELIEVE IN CHRIST-LIKE
HARACTER"

"Religion that ends in the individual,
ds." It is also true that religion that
ver begins with the individual, never
gins. Before one can work "in His
me" for the redemption of the world,
must resolve to live a pure and right-
us life.
"I Would Be True" is a favorite hymn
youth. It was not written as a hymn.
was first part of a letter from a young
n of twenty-three to his mother. He
led it, "My Creed." The mother
ought it was too good for her to keep
herself; so she gave it to *Harper's*
agazine for publication.

The Junior Choir will sing, "I Would Be True."

James Russell Lowell was a poet and prose writer. He was professor, editor, and diplomat. He was professor at Harvard, in the Chair of Letters once occupied by Longfellow. He was Editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* and *North American Review.* He was United States Minister to Spain and England. Lowell wrote a hymn which is a ringing call to go forward and an affirmation of faith in the ultimate triumph of truth.

"Once to every man and nation
Comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of truth with falsehood,
For the good or evil side."

The Senior Choir will sing, "Once to Every Man and Nation."

"WE BELIEVE IN SACRIFICIAL SERVICE"

Above the noise of selfish strife, in market-place, business life, and home, we must hear the voice of the Master calling us to service. The needy today are vivid to us by the millions of homeless, destitute, diseased, discouraged, and pitiful victims of our worn-torn world.

Think also of missionary service for Christ. The missionary really makes a sacrifice; he lives away from his homeland, his friends, all for the love of others who are God's children also.

"A Prayer for the City" was the title of a hymn given originally by the author, Frank Mason North. He was moved with compassion for the needs and fears of the city.

Let us sing, "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life" (verses 1 through 4).

Offertory: Prayer of Dedication;

DOXOLOGY and Presentation of Offering.

"WE BELIEVE IN THE CHURCH"

The church is the visible evidence of God's presence. It is "on the rock of ages founded." It is imperfect; divided; at times impotent. But still it is the motive

power for righteousness in the world. The hymn of the church we are to sing was written by John Newton, a converted slave trader. In a storm at sea, with slaves from Africa aboard, he became a changed man. He wrote his own epitaph:

"John Newton, Clerk,
Once an infidel and libertine,
A servant of slaves in Africa,
Was by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ
Preserved, restored, and pardoned,
And appointed to preach the faith
He had long labored to destroy."

Let us sing, "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken."

The Senior Choir will sing Martin Luther's hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." This has been called, "The greatest hymn of the greatest man in the greatest period of German history."

"WE BELIEVE IN THIS NATION UNDER GOD"

In this day of crisis, we have been thankful that we lived in the United States of America. We sing, "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies," mindful of all our natural beauties; we think of our noble Pilgrim heritage; we praise those who have devoted themselves to our country's welfare.

Katherine Lee Bates was with a grou of teachers on Pike's Peak in 1893. Gaz ing at the beauty before her from thi mountain top, the song was born. Tha evening back in Colorado Springs, th words were written out. Her song ha become one of the great national hymns along with "America" and "Our Nationa Anthem." America needs God to becom great: "America, America, God shed hi grace on thee, and crown thy good wit brotherhood, from sea to shining sea."

Let us sing, "O Beautiful for Spaciou Skies."

We bind ourselves into a fellowship o believers as together we lift our voices i song. We sing our creed. We live ou faith.

Poem:

"How many of us ever stop to think
of music as a wondrous magic link
With God; taking sometimes the plac
of prayer
when words have failed us 'neath th
weight of care.
Music, that knows no country, race no
creed,
but gives to each according to his need.

BENEDICTION: Choral response

ORGAN POSTLUDE

Concerning the Department of the Ministry

IT is now a little over two years since the National Council of the Congregational Christian churches definitely organized their Commission on the Ministry. Dr. Frederick L. Fagley was, so to speak, detached from the Commission on Evangelism and assigned the spacious and quite undefined task of organizing the new Commission and plotting the lines of its action. He brought to this highly strategic office his sound historical sense, his creative vision, his faculty for wise direction and also his capacity for the accumulatio and interpretation of facts. The "Depart ment" as is, for so it has been renamed is the result. One would not believe tha so much could have been done in tw years, and Dr. Fagley's contribution i giving it form and future is very likel to be the culmination of his distinguishe service to our fellowship.

The first meeting of the departmen after the National Council, was held a Deering, New Hampshire, July 22–2

ring, now the property of the Home
ionary Society, is becoming Eastern
quarters for summer conferences.
buildings, more or less scattered over
hillsides, supply the necessities of
-living and high-thinking. (There
a few distracting luxuries and little
ference from the outside world.) A
r's school, well staffed and well at-
ed, was already in session. More or
Who's Who in our churches were in
nce, and a beneficent Providence
e the drought which had been afflict-
New England, with soft, refreshing
ers. These interrupted horseshoe
ing, in which delicate art there were
al experts, and somewhat dampened
us beds. They did not, however,
pen the zeal of the assembled brethren.
y merely kept them indoors and at
k.

* * *

he Department now includes officially,
officially (and just there) forty-four
bers. (Some duplication of these sta-
s.) They are classified as Active,
responding or Co-apted members. The
or, although a co-apted member, has
ery vague notion of that particular
us. Geographically the Commission
hes from coast to coast, and about
ty members of these highly represen-
ve groups were at Deering. They held
sessions around long document-strewn
es in an all-purpose room, brightened
a fire on a spacious hearth, and un-
ried discussion.

he "agenda" were supplied and con-
led by "the Report of the Department
he Ministry" in the advanced reports
mitted to the Grinnell Council, pages
to 46. It should be reread by any one
ling this editorial report. Its findings
recommendations were followed seri-
n, and though the discussions naturally
ved in a wide and widening channel,
er Dr. Fagley's direction they followed
r assigned course. The members had
strategic advantage over the current
is Peace Conference. They all spoke the same language and were fundamentally one in mind and spirit. They registered their conclusions in a series of findings, which will have a vital bearing upon the Congregational Christian ministry.

It was not always easy to phrase the findings and the committee thereupon had, as a Yankee neighbor woman of ours long ago said about bringing up a baby—"quite a chore." (The editor has always considered that one of the masterpieces of understatement.) The findings in their first form are now on this old ink-stained table. They are not yet in perfected form for publication. The QUARTERLY will eventually publish them in full.

The backgrounds of all the findings, as well as all the discussions, were in the facts and figures of the aforesaid "Advanced Report" with all their implications. Their implications in our fluid denominational readjustments; in the unrest and almost desperate spiritual need of this present American world—not to speak of Missions; in the increased cost of living; in the religious decay of our rural areas; in the basal need of all churches for a numerically adequate and adequately trained ministry, and a way of getting churches which need a pastor, and pastors who need a church together without lost motion and some assurance that the union so secured would be blessed of Heaven. One could hardly say that the discussions began with the cradle and ended with the grave, but they did, almost literally.

* * *

The first and longest findings dealt with the recruiting "of more and better trained young men and women from our Congregational Christian Churches for the ministry of Christ at home and abroad." The conclusions which the Commission reached laid and will lay a responsibility for the self-commitment of youth to the ministry and other idealistic vocations upon parents, ministers and educators. There is something to be said for ministerial transfers from one denomination to another. It may facilitate the Com-

munion of the Saints and Congregational pulpits have more than once shown with a luster Methodistically derived. But, on the whole, ministers nurtured in Congregational-Christian homes and churches and trained specifically in our seminaries are likely to have an at-homeness in Congational-Christian pulpits which cannot otherwise be gained. At any rate a Communion which is not adequately renewing its own ministry from its own sources is failing as a "keeper of the springs." So much the Commission, and no group of men could be less aggressively sectarian, felt strongly.

Something more than a desire to see the churches for which they spoke well manned informed these discussions. The crying need of our very civilization to be saved from secularism lent gravity to their words. Unless, they thought, there is a rededication of youth to the enduring values and vocations, there can be no cure for the sicknesses of society. Dr. Fagley quoted at length from the findings of Educators whose quests he thought were more than parallel to the quests of the Commission. Society must be renewed at its spiritual sources.

Once youth is self-committed to the ministry, the guardianship and support of the Church and the churches should be assured, and above all, should be wise and constant. Financial help, the Commission thought, might well begin in college for students contemplating the ministry. The danger implicit in a subsidized education must of course be guarded against. The responsibility for this should begin with the home-church and be stabilized through the Associations. And finally "in consideration of the importance of recruiting leadership for Christian service" the Commission voted to ask the proper Boards to consider the employment of a full time Secretary of Recruiting.

The Commission agreed that something very much like the medical technique of Interneship would be a good thing for Seminary graduates. They could profitably spend at least two years under the pastoral direction of an understanding ministe always provided the assistant was giv a chance to grow both in grace and know edge and not used merely as a co venience. This relation, the Commissi thought, might be so standardized as become a recognized practice, and so th found.

The "rural ministry" was discussed length and from every point of view. Ne to recruiting this was possibly the ou standing concern of the Commission. Th rather patterned finding: that the Boa of Home Missions and the State Superi tendents should "consider the possibili of developing high potentially areas rural sections" does not at all reflect th range of what was said or the sense urgency in the situation. Salaries can up for consideration, of course. The should reflect the increased cost of livi and include the not-at-all incidental e pense of being a pastor with a car and telephone and a generally too large pa sonage to be kept warm and about ever so often moving or getting moved, al children to be looked after and educate The Commission thought two thousan dollars a year, plus parsonage and th indicated allowances, was the salary flo for a rural pastorate. Twenty-four hu dred dollars, with parsonage or rent an similar incidentals was a salary floor f a city pastorate. So much they hopeful found, and challenged the combined r sources of the churches and the nation State Boards to do something about

* * *

Unfinished business included Social S curity for ministers and church worker a National Bureau for placement, " Service Assistance to ministers"; how get us all profitably reading and thinkin and the MINISTER'S QUARTERLY, whi from the editor's point of view is alwa unfinished business. Representatives seven Seminaries training men and wom for the Congregational Christian Mini try, that is Presidents and Deans, we holding sessions of their own while t

mmission was in session. These lent ellar quality to the general fellowship ch brightened an overcast day. As- dly the problems of the ministry have ly been considered along a wider front with more matured long range plan- . It will all take time naturally, a deal of time. But the promise is phetic.

either the findings of the Commis- nor the official minutes which have e in since this began to be written y adequately convey the significance the sessions. These situations con- ted at Deering are not new. There always been pastorless churches and chless pastors and lost motion in get- them together, and restless churches pastors after they were got together. besides all this the general and al- s unfinished business of being a Chris- minister at all. Congregational pul- have always attracted ministers from r Communion, though only recently e they begun to be called "guest min- rs." It is doubtful, however, if Con- gational officialdom and the churches their ministers have ever been chal- ged by a more statesmanlike summary ll the factors in the contemporaneous ation than Dr. Fagley's advanced re- t. There is nothing dry about those istics.

Preachers, like poets, cannot be made rder by any educational sequence, and ess youth be inwardly called, enlist- nt pressure may become a peril. But all that the Christian ministry of the ure should be the deep concern of the rches. It demands an adequate presen- on, not only of the claims of the min- y as a vocation, but of the wonder and recompense of being a Christian minister. There is an equally crying need for a sympathetic and a sustaining guidance through the long preparatory years. Also that when at last a young minister stands in his own first pulpit he should be assured of freedom enough from financial anxieties to do his work well, and be assured also of a free course to run. He will not ask to be glorified in it, but only that he may say a little of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. The realization of all this and so much more is not a mere Commission's dream. It is the maturing purpose of the leaders of our churches.

* * *

What a musician would call the "overtone" of the Deering meetings was really more significant, though being more unreportable than what can be reported. The freedom of discussion, for example, the meeting of kindred minds, the unhurried and uncompelled movements toward unanimity were overtones of wise and gracious spirits—Spirit-led. This after all is "our" way, the Congregational Christian "Way," the commerce of equals moving toward ends sought in unselfishness and found in fellowship. Our ministry has thus been sought and found and trained and thus it has functioned for three hundred years. This treasure may be in earthen vessels, but it is a treasure to be jealously guarded.

This issue, the editor trusts, will be waiting for its readers, ministers themselves, as they come back from their vacation, and climb their pulpit stairs again. May Grace attend them! Those stairs lead to the highest station in the world.

Pastoral Epistle V

Concerning the "Old Guard"

Dear Brother Ministers:

You would have been both interested and enlightened could you have met with the Department of the Ministry at Deering last month. You would have been encouraged too—for the problem which seemed to concern us most deeply was how to help secure more adequate salaries for our ministers, especially for these in the smaller churches.

In the discussion I made the point that while there are parishes that can't pay more, there are probably a larger number which have potentially both the field and the resources to give a man a full-time job, and an adequate living if these can be made available. Why aren't they made available? Would not you who are wrestling with this problem first hand agree with me that the answer is to be found in the attitude of what we may call the "old guard" towards the "outsider." Perhaps you would amend that statement to read: "The attitude of the old guard—period."

In such churches, and they are not always small ones either, there is usually a little group who feel that the church belongs to them, as it belonged to their fathers before them. Some of them have held the same offices for years and they don't want to give them up, no matter how much they say they do. Frequently there is a small self-perpetuating group, some of them not even members or attendants, who control the finances of the parish. Now these people are in most cases well meaning, and deeply devoted to their church; also they are often leaders in the community. They bemoan the fact that the people of the town do not support the church by coming to the services or contributing to its support. But they are not willing really to take these "outsiders," as they sometimes call them, into the real fellowship of the church.

How often it happens that a young man comes into the parish and begins to build up the congregation and take in new members. Pretty soon there begins to be criticism. The new people begin to stop coming to church because they are conscious of not being wanted; or they lose interest because there is nothing for them to do. The minister gets discouraged, seeks another opening and the church falls back into its old rut.

But every once in a while, and here is the bright side of the picture, the old guard dies off or gives up and the "outsiders" take over. Or a minister refuses to accept the situation, and keeps patiently and persistently at work until gradually the attitude of the old guard changes and they welcome the outsiders and put them in office and set them to work—then there is a real revival. The congregation grows, the financial resources increase, and the minister's salary is raised to what it should be.

If you agree with the diagnosis of the situation and have something to offer out of your own experience, will you not write to us? The Special Committee on Ministerial Salaries appointed at Grinnell will be glad to receive your comments.

Faithfully yours,

HORACE F. HOLTON

14 Beacon Street
Boston, Mass.